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IN CONFIDENCE: NOT TO BE QUOTED WITHOUT REFERENCE TO THE LABORATORY

CRUISE REPORT

FRV "GOLDSEEKER"

I 29 May - 21 June 1973

II 26 June - 13 July 1973

OBJECTIVES:

1. To compare the efficiencies of standard east coast creels and parlour creels in catching crabs.
2. To study the moulting and movement of crabs in Shetland waters by means of tagging.
3. To trawl for bait.
4. To study the state of scallop and queen stocks in Shetland.
5. To take daily surface temperature readings.

NARRATIVE:

Part I. "Goldseeker" left Kirkwall on 29 May and proceeded to Scalloway where gear and bait were taken on board. Operations were restricted to the area around Scalloway by strong south to south-west winds throughout the period. Owing to the weather "Goldseeker" could not go to the grounds off West Burrafirth, the main area fished by local boats for crabs. Hauls with a standard 4 ft. scallop dredge were made at suitable positions. Part I of the cruise finished at Scalloway on June 21.

Part II. The crew and scientific staff rejoined "Goldseeker" on 25 June and proceeded to Mid Yell via Lerwick. During this part of the cruise the strong winds persisted and hauling of creels was possible on only seven occasions in positions in the Mid Yell/Fetlar area Dales Voe, and around Mousa Island, where crabs proved to be extremely scarce.

RESULTS:

Creeling

Part I. In 480 hauls a total of 192 crabs - 92 males (40 in Parlour creel 52 in East-coast creel), and 100 females (40 in Parlour creel), and 60 in East coast creel) were caught, of these only 23.5% were of marketable size.

Part II. 316 creel hauls produced 35 crabs - 16 males (Parlour 9 East-coast 7), and 19 females (Parlour 8 East-coast 11). Overall the east coast creels caught 130 crabs and the parlour creels 97 crabs in equal numbers of hauls.

Crab tagging

Crabs were purchased from the boats operating off West Burrafirth and tagged using the suture method. A total of 230 males and 273 females were tagged and released at 7 positions covering the area from Hildasay Island to the entrance of Pappa Sound on the west coast. All crabs caught on the east coast were tagged by the suture method and released.

Dredging

In Part I of the trip thirty dredge hauls were carried out in the Scalloway area, with very poor results. The best haul recorded yielded only 3 P. maximus and 14 C. opercularis. In Part II eighteen hauls were made only 8 P. maximus and 2 C. opercularis were caught.

Hydrography

Daily surface temperatures were taken.

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14. December 1973